

# Latin American Documentary Language in the New Century: Impact and Perspectives

Claudia Ferman, editor

Documentary language constitutes a cinematographic tradition of great continuity in Latin America, one whose development has run parallel to the production of fictions, and over the last few decades, thanks to the digital revolution, has often improved upon it. The reasons for this productivity are well-known: the proliferation of social movements that saw in the documentary an effective instrument for communicating and promoting debates related to social and political struggle; the preference for realist aesthetics more in tune with a cinema of political commitment; the creation of film schools throughout the region, particularly over the last two decades; the development of the educational and community television in countries with progressive democratic governments, which saw in this production an important instrument for social transformation, and in general the creation of alternative exhibition spaces (see Julianne Burton, 1990; Antonio Traverso & Tomás Crowder-Taraborrelli, 2013). The relevance of this production can also be seen in the ongoing creation of festivals dedicated exclusively to documentary in the Latin American context such as DOCSDF (Mexico), FIDBA (Argentina), FIDOCs (Chile), CARACAS DOC (Venezuela), and others, and the broadening of the space dedicated to documentary in the region's international festivals such as the traditional Festival of the New Latin American Cinema (Havana, Cuba), and the Festival of Guadalajara (Mexico), or in BAFICI (Argentina). There is, nevertheless, a growing imbalance between a proliferating documentary production, and the critical reflection dedicated to the documentary in Latin America. This imbalance becomes even more acute when we revise the processes of circulation and archive in the continent and the possibilities of public access to that production. Today a generalized conscience exists, among both the producers and critics and educators, with regard to this marked disproportion. The significance and the strength of the so-called Latin American Cinema, which gave special importance to documentary, marked critical reflection in the three decades with which this movement is associated (1960 to 1980), and had an enormous influence on later production, both documentary and critical, in all its aspects: historical, aesthetic and thematic (See Octavio Getino, 2002; Viviana Rangil, 2007; Gonzalo Aguilar, 2008).

Nowadays more and more forums can be found in which archive and access policies are discussed, as well as a growing (although still very insufficient) bibliography in this respect. This issue proposes a space for debate on the very recent production in the Latin American context, now that the digital revolution has delimited and consolidated new paradigms of production, circulation and access, and as such, the opening up to new audiences. This temporal juncture (the mere thirteen years of the 21st century) provides the impulse for a specific consideration of the characteristics of this new paradigm, beyond its strictly technological aspects ("modalities of documentary film practice," Jorge Ruffinelli), a paradigm characterized by new subjects, new creators and protagonists, new ways of communicating, new relations between documentary production and the lives and politics of communities and societies, and new ways of producing and transferring knowledge (i.e. Jeff D. Himpele, 2008).

The set of topics that the collection seeks to consider includes: audiovisual communication and state policies; new media laws; public sphere and counter information / audience formation and education; educational documentary / film patrimony; treatment of stock footage in recent production / market, circulation, archive and access / festivals of documentary cinema; information and analysis / reports on regional, national, sub-regional productions / schools and formation of documentary-makers; aesthetic forms and theories in the Latin American ambit / production strategies (collective,

organizational); indigenous filmmaking / exogenous gazes: the documentary on Latin America; representations.

Please send a 400-500 words proposal by **May 1st, 2014**. The collection may include images and video excerpts under the guidelines set by [alter/nativas](#); please, indicate in your abstract summary information on the images/video you are planning to incorporate in your article. Essays of no more than 8,000 words in Spanish, Portuguese or English, including a summary of 250-300 words and a brief biography, should be submitted by **December 1st, 2014** to Claudia Ferman ([cferman@richmond.edu](mailto:cferman@richmond.edu)), editor of this issue.